FE Week
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Leading college falls from outstanding to inadequate

Chris Henwood
@Chris_Henwood

EXCLUSIVE

One of England's biggest colleges has fallen from outstanding to the lowest Ofsted grade of inadequate.

Liverpool Community College, which achieved the highest grade almost across the board following inspection in early 2009, has been hit with a grade four result.

It was visited at the end of January and principal Elaine Bowker, who took up post mid-2011, said she accepted the result and was "working hard to ensure the areas highlighted as inadequate are improved."

"The college accepts the recent report by Ofsted and is working hard to ensure that the areas highlighted as inadequate are improved," she said.

"While the overall rating is disappointing to us, we would like to stress that there are numerous positive elements within it.

"The report highlights that the college is providing outstanding opportunities for students in other work-based learning which is a key part of the provision we provide.

"It also highlights how safe our college environment is for our students, and this is hugely important to us.

"It also shows that success rates have started improving over the last 12 months since the new senior leadership team have been in post."

The 17,000-learner college had a turnover of £47.5m for the year ending July 31, 2011, according to Skills Funding Agency figures.

The agency accounts listed the college as England's 24th largest general further education or tertiary college out of 225, by total income.

The grading blow means it has becomes the biggest grade four college based on turnover.

It comes around seven months after the college teamed up with Derbyshire-based provider Aspire Achieve Advance Ltd to save more than 500 jobs after First4Skills went into administration.

The joint venture agreement meant the college became responsible for the training of around 10,000 apprentices — becoming one of the country's biggest providers of apprentice training.

At the same time, the college opened a new £35m Learning Exchange in the city centre to act as a hub for its five main centres.

Meanwhile, work has started on a new academy in partnership with Peel that will teach water-based courses including leisure diving, sailing and commercial water qualifications.

It has also looked at University Technical College plans with Liverpool John Moores University.

And last month it announced talks to set up a new English language school in Libya — and possibly a fully-fledged further education college there within five years.

It was not clear whether the grade four inspection blow would hit college plans, but Mrs Bowker said she had already met staff to look at "tackling weakness".

"All of our team is completely committed to improving every aspect of college life for our students and this includes improving our Ofsted rating," she said.

"We see this as a transformational period for the College and we accept that this is a big task that will take time and will require our unwavering commitment.

"We have met with all of our internal teams, from Governors to teaching staff, and we are certain that there is a strong commitment to tackle any weaknesses."

Other than Liverpool Community College, the most recent grade one to grade four fall happened at Macclesfield College in February 2012.

It had a turnover £11m for the year ending July 2011.



Knocking spots off the competition

It all went wild for beauty students in Somerset when they had the chance to see who was king or queen of the make-up jungle.

Beauty therapy students from Strode College, in Street, showed off their skills and creative flair in a college make-up competition that had the theme 'wild kingdom'.

They were set the challenge of creating a complete look using make-up, hair styling, an outfit, accessories and nails.

Beauty therapy teacher Marcie Mickleburgh said: "The event was a great success. It gave the students a chance to demonstrate the skills and techniques that they have learned"

A snow leopard won first place in the level three category, designed by Charlotte Collins, 18, from Yeovil, and modelled by Celia Graziano, 17, from Henstridge.

The level two cateogory was won by Emma Daley, 16, from Somerton with a mermaid design modelled by Sophie Satin, 16, from Yeovil.

More campus round-up on pages 13-16

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Top Richard Review tweets:

@davidhNIACE
Great that Govt acknowledges it is stage not age in Apps & need to be springboard for a career

@guildheceo
Post Richard Review consultation on apprenticeships also out today - BIS not doing enough to use apprenticeships to deliver HE options

@PamCalvert
Important moment for @Apprenticeships. Gov will take forward big principles of #richardreview@matthancockmp

@JulianGravatt
AoC response to Future of Apprenticeships paper – A lot rests on employers taking a bigger role & reform of standards

@DougRichard
Happy that gov't has responded to my review. I am hopeful that they will include funding reform as well. #liveinhope. @bisgovuk @FEWeek

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Colleges' jobs 'failure'

Chris Henwood
@Chris_Henwood

Ofsted has criticised colleges for missing skills targets and failing to prepare learners for local job opportunities.

The education watchdog found that of the 17 colleges it visited for a survey on local accountability and autonomy, just three were offering a curriculum tailored to their areas.

It conducted its survey to find out how the sector was responding to the government's New Challenges, New Chances document, introduced just over a year ago to give colleges more freedom to tailor their curricula to local needs.

But Ofsted's research uncovered little change in the colleges it looked at.

It also criticised local enterprise partnerships for not being "fully effective in working with the colleges to ensure high-quality, coherent local planning for further education and skills in their respective areas".

Ofsted national director of learning and skills Matthew Coffey said that only three colleges had revised their curricula to prepare learners better for local opportunities, and to meet local, regional and national skills gaps.

"More worryingly, over a third of those visited did not have sufficient labour market intelligence to help them to plan their provision," he said.

"Many colleges were able to clearly identify common priorities within their local region, such as poverty and deprivation, rising unemployment and a mismatch of skills. However, there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate how successful they were in supporting progression to further training or employment."

The report challenged college governors to hold their institutions to account for the quality of provision and outcomes for learners. It also urged them to provide comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of their college's response to changing local economic and social priorities.

Joy Mercer, the Association of Colleges director of policy, said: "This report indicates there is much to be done. These efforts are to be made across the board — in partnerships by including colleges at the highest levels, in colleges to learn from the best, in government to support the challenges of raising the participation age. All parties also must agree data that would help governors and leaders judge their impact on growth and unemployment.

"We are pleased therefore that Ofsted recognises and commends the progress in many colleges and the exceptional practice in some.

"There are many recommendations with which we agree. For example, it encourages partnership between schools and colleges to make sure young people are directed to the most appropriate provision.

"Currently this is difficult to achieve, as competition for students with school sixth forms means colleges are routinely prevented from advising pupils on their curriculum range."

She said it did not "hurt" for a critical eye to be cast over partnerships and the inconsistency in their relationships with colleges.

"Colleges are making determined efforts to engage with their LEPs. These efforts need to be reciprocated if the full potential of colleges acting in support of their local communities and businesses is to be realised," added Ms Mercer.

FE Week news in brief

Outstanding 'on way'

The first general FE college to get a top grade from Ofsted under its new common inspection framework is expected to be revealed soon.

The college — understood to have been inspected in the past six weeks — has not been identified and its Ofsted report is still not public.

Lord Lucas told fellow peers: "It has been widely acknowledged that we have a problem as a nation with the quality of the teaching of vocational subjects in further education.

"The most recent example and proof of that has been Ofsted's refusal to grant outstanding status to any FE college, although I believe there is one going through the process now."

The last outstanding result was achieved by Hampshire's Eastleigh College in July, under the old framework.

Agency quals warning

The Skills Funding Agency has reissued a warning for awarding organisations to sign up to an official learner record service or risk missing out on government cash.

It wants all Ofqual-recognised awarding organisations to sign the Personal Learning Record (PLR) Awarding Organisation Agreement.

It first told them in September that they had to sign up, and then three months later published a list of those yet to do so.

The agency said 136 awarding bodies had signed up, leaving more than 100 qualifications at risk of having their funding "cease from August 1".

"We have encouraged awarding organisations to sign up to the PLR agreement and continue to do so," said an agency spokesperson.

Richard's tax proposals 'fudged'

Eleanor Radford
@EleanorRadford

The government's response to the Richard Review has been branded a "fudge" that fails to address the need for "reform of funding incentives".

Shadow FE Minister Gordon Marsden spoke out as the government published its response to the review, The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Next Steps from the Richard Review.

The government's response, which includes a 24-question consultation, comes four months after Doug Richard's independent review of apprenticeships.

Business Secretary Vince Cable described the response and its plans to "empower employers", as "radically changing" the way apprenticeships were delivered.

But Mr Marsden questioned ministerial commitment to employer ownership, saying: "Ministers appear to have comprehensively ducked Richard's recommendations over ways of incentivising employers to take on apprentices via reforming funding schemes."

Former Dragons' Den investor Mr Richard, has insisted that tax incentives for employers through National Insurance or a tax credit system were central to his views on apprenticeship reform.

In November he told *FE Week*: "I feel strongly about this point and I think it's the heart of the review."

The Association of Employment and Learning Providers, which has rejected his tax breaks argument, said it was pleased the government had held back from "any firm commitment" to the idea. The group said it had "warned the government" that any adoption of Mr Richard's tax credits proposal was "fraught with danger".

But when pressed on the matter during a webinar hosted by *FE Week*, FE minister Matthew Hancock appeared not to have ruled out the idea.

"We are looking at all the options," he said.

And the UK Commission for Employment and Skills, which championed tax incentives in its new report Employer Ownership of Skills Building the Momentum, further hinted the government was working towards the measure.

Michael Davis, chief executive of the commission, which has run employer ownership pilots for the government, said he didn't believe ministers had "gone cold" on the proposal but that the tax incentives scheme required "a lot more work".

"I see this as a work in progress," he told *FE Week*.

"The minister has been very supportive . . . and the government has said as much on it at this point as it can.

"You have to take this forward in manageable pieces, and tax and direct payments take a lot of thinking. The commission's view is that tax is a long-term proposition to hard wire vocational training into the labour market. Maternity pay just happens in the labour market — and it works — but it took a lot of hard work first."

He said the commission's preferred way to fund apprenticeships would be to use National Insurance, a model that worked for all businesses, organisations and charities.

Mr Richard tweeted shortly after the response was published (see below) and told *FE Week*: "I continue to hope that the government will ensure that the reform takes into account the need for a change in the approach to funding. I am pleased to see that it continues to explore new approaches."

The consultation ends on May 22.

Editor's comment page 4



Doug Richard @DougRichard 8 hrs
Happy that gov't has responded to my review. I am hopeful that they will include funding reform as well. #liveinhope. @bisgovuk @FEWeek
Expand

Value of new FE quality kitemark questioned

Eleanor Radford
@EleanorRadford

A leading education figure has questioned the "worth" of a new quality mark launched by FE Minister Matthew Hancock.

Sir Geoff Hall, chair of the Information Authority and former principal of New College Nottingham, asked if chartered status for top providers was "worth doing". His query came during a workshop at an Association of Colleges conference, on information and accountability in FE.

Susan Pember, director of FE and skills investment at the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, who was running the discussion, argued that the aim of the new stamp of approval was to bring together local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) and colleges to create a signpost to legitimate providers for the UK Borders Agency.

Sir Geoff said: "Shouldn't it be more rigorous with an Ofsted marker included to make it more valuable to providers?"

Mrs Pember said that no one had come back from the public consultation asking for extra emphasis on inspections.

The status would have three categories; colleges, providers and community colleges, and would only include providers within the Skills Finding Agency's system. Areas judged would include engagement with community, and showing strong leadership and management.

"It's not the badge that's important — it's the conversations the providers will have with the LEPs. It's about coming together and building a collective reputation for the sector," said Mrs Pember.

Providers would be judged by a panel of unpaid members made up of "respected" individuals with a "wide range of expertise". They would include employers, learners, teachers, providers, the community and those with chartered status in other sectors. Colleges would not have to pay towards the process.

Other concerns were that colleges would get in top consultants to write "attractive" applications and that community work varied hugely between colleges. Those in high ethnically diverse areas faced greater challenges.

Mrs Pember said these issues would be looked at during the next stage when a "pathfinder" was created with colleges volunteering to be "dummies" on a trial run.

Mr Hancock told the conference that chartered status had "many fathers", addressing concerns that it was "just another replacement" for previous markers such as the Training Quality Standard.

"It needs to have a long-term impact and be independent and embedded in the sector — rigorous and aspirational but not burdensome and bureaucratic," he said.



The minister presented a certificate to Lisa Cassidy (pictured left), a graphic design student at The Manchester College, who created the winning design for a chartered status logo (shown below).

"I was amazed to win such a high profile competition. As a student you never think your work is good enough so this is a real boost to my confidence," said the 24-year-old from Eccles.

She also won an iPad and the chance to shadow *FE Week* designer Dan Duke on a work experience placement.

CHARTERED STATUS

Cash-strapped college faces being split up

Chris Henwood
@Chris_Henwood

The new principal of a debt-ridden college has admitted that a merger three years ago has failed — and that FE minister Matthew Hancock has approved plans for it to break up.

West Kent College and South Kent College became K College after a KPMG report in 2008 recommended merger.

The colleges won approval from the Learning and Skills Council, predecessor to the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), after they carried out due diligence, including a consultation with stakeholders and the local community.

But crippling debts of more than £6m have since resulted in job losses and a SFA notice of concern.

Phil Frier, who became K College principal in January following the resignation of Bill Fearon, has now conceded that the merger, which drew together five campuses, had not been a success.

His proposal to split the college into two separate geographical areas — Dover and Folkestone, and Ashford, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells — has got the green light.

Mr Frier said: "The merger has not worked. FE colleges should be responsive to the needs of local employers and learners, and the corporation believes the proposal going forward to the minister is the best way forward.

"Preparations are underway for an open and competitive process to secure new college structures by September 2014."

The break-up plan follows an independent review that identified and appraised the specific needs of the geographic regions that K College serves.

In Ashford, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells, the corporation proposes either a new provider or a new governance team for a 'standalone' college.

A spokesperson for the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills said: "Along with the SFA and the Education Funding Agency (EFA), we have reviewed K College's structure and prospects appraisal.

"Mr Hancock has agreed that the SFA will run a competitive tender exercise for its provision and the EFA's provision currently delivered by the college.

"Proposals submitted through the competitive tender exercise will need to demonstrate how they will meet the needs of local people and businesses. More information will be available — including how providers can express their interest — on the SFA website in the next few weeks.

"The college will now concentrate on ensuring that continuity of learning is maintained. We expect to have secured the delivery of replacement provision . . .by early 2014."

K College, which was given a grade three by Ofsted last year, will continue to recruit for the next academic year, starting in September. Courses offered will remain in line with the college plan until July next year, subject to learner numbers.

"We will continue the excellent work completed over the last year," said Mr Frier.

"Securing an above-benchmark figure for long [full-time] programmes in 2011/12 was a fantastic achievement. We must build on this for 2012/13.

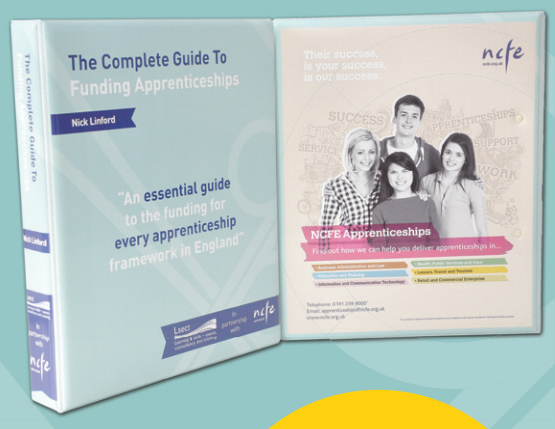
"Last term we congratulated nearly 100 members of staff who achieved a grade one for their teaching, and we look forward to many more throughout the year.

"Students can know that their future education is secure and improving throughout this difficult time for staff and managers."

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Editor's comment

Heart of the matter

In November last year, Doug Richard said he felt strongly about apprenticeship funding reform, and his preferred option was through the national insurance system or as a tax credit.

In fact he said it was "at the heart" of his "all-or-nothing" review.

Then, in December, the FE Minister Matthew Hancock announced he would be excluding apprenticeships from the Skills Funding Agency reform of adult funding for 2013/14, so he could consider Mr Richard's proposals.

Fast-forward to March, and the government response contains neither a critique of funding apprenticeships this way, nor even any related questions in the consultation.

So an obvious question is, putting it anatomically, what's happened to the heart?

The minister made it clear in an FE Week webinar that funding apprenticeships in the future via the tax system remained an option.

Yet, to repeat the point, the government consultation makes no proposals and asks no questions relating to the chapter on employer purchasing power.

Of course, the decision to reform apprenticeship funding in this way probably now rests with the Treasury, but would it not want to know if the sector, and more importantly employers, thought it would be a better system?

But there may be a work-around, so let me make a recommendation.

Use the 'any further comments' final consultation question — number 24 — to make your voice heard.

Nick Linford, editor



AELP fears for skills funding

Eleanor Radford

@EleanorRadford

Government money for skills could be spent on "building bridges or community centres" if proposals for local enterprise partnerships are approved, the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) has warned.

Lord Heseltine's recommendation for partnerships to bid from a central pot of government cash, including the adult skills budget, came under fire ahead of an expected announcement on his plans in this week's Budget.

The association has submitted its views to the all-party parliamentary group on local growth, local enterprise partnerships and enterprise zones.

"We believe partnerships have a role to play in skills, but this should be advisory only and not as part of the mechanism through which funding is routed," the association told the group.

It added: "The proposal to move adult skills budgets under partnership control is . . . mistargeted.

"As the adult skills budget diminishes, the arrangements for deploying it need to be made simpler rather than more complicated so that the overhead cost as a proportion of the budget is reduced.

"If partnerships were given these budgets without ring-fencing there would be no guarantee that skills money would be spent on skills.

"It would be a backward step to move to a regime where 16 to 18-year-olds did not have apprenticeships as an option as a LEP had decided to invest the funding, for example, into building bridges or community centres."

Lord Heseltine's proposals, set out in his 228-page No Stone Unturned report launched last October, made the case for a major rebalancing of responsibilities for economic development between central and local government, and between government and the private sector.

The former Deputy Prime Minister told MPs on the Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) Select Committee last month that the government had already "accepted the principle" of his single pot.

His report was released just over a month after the Association of Colleges warned that partnerships were failing to take advantage of the "fantastic" education resources offered by colleges.

Its report said there was "patchy" engagement between the two, with a lack of college representation on partnership boards and a lack of understanding of the role that FE played in economic growth.

A spokesperson said its governors' council was writing to chairs following talks with BIS officials to encourage governing bodies to drive closer engagement with partnerships.

But David Frost, chairman of the Local Enterprise Partnership National Network, said: "Unquestionably, the relationship with skills is right at the top of partnerships' agenda. They understand the need to engage with FE and higher education — they are central to the work partnerships are doing."

Correction

What a difference a word makes. In this case, that word was 'actress'.

Its omission came in last week's profile of Labour MP, and Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee chair, Adrian Bailey.

He was speaking in reference to who, living or dead, he would invite to his ideal dinner party.

His choice was Madeleine Carol — and yes, she was an actress, from the 1920s.

The omission was a failing of profile author Chris Henwood, not Mr Bailey.

Have you spotted something wrong with this edition of *FE Week?*

If so, feel free to tell us about it, including the page number and story headline, and explain what the problem is. Email us at news@feweek.co.uk with Corrections in the subject line.

Comment

Esol funding 'safe,' says SFA

Does anyone at the Skills Funding Agency have ANY concept of the idea of planning? Do they think students turn up in September and at that point we decide what to deliver to them?

The system the SFA has introduced quite clearly does reduce Esol funding (assuming providers are delivering more than approx. 125 hours at present, which almost all will be) and its utter nonsense for them to claim otherwise.

It says: 'The agency has not set any funding rates for the new QCF qualifications, as these have yet to be developed.'

Fantastic, so their argument is that funding hasn't been reduced because new quals don't even exist yet.

Jon Carr

What galls me is that from the very beginning of this consultation about the change to the funding model we have said "What about Esol? What about Skills for Life?" because it was immediately apparent that it wouldn't fit.

Why on earth we're scrabbling around for answers now when this should have been at the heart of the proposals is beyond me.

"The introduction of the new funding system will not reduce the funding paid for Esol learners" — these are weasel words indeed. It may not reduce the overall funding, but it categorically reduces the funding per learner in comparison to 12/13 and, despite reassurances that something will be sorted, it is now half past March and we have programmes to plan.

Steve Hewitt

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FE Week profile

Mike Hopkins ~ his story

Rebecca Cooney
@RebeccaKCooney

The principal of Middlesbrough College talks to *FE Week*

The smiling principal of Middlesbrough College seems like an unlikely sea captain. Just look at him in this week's Campus Round-up pages where he's showing off the soles of his feet painted blue and green.

But, last year, Mike Hopkins found himself in his element in a Force 8 gale when out sailing at night with two friends.

"We were sailing up from London to Hartlepool and suddenly got a gale warning," he says.

"We were 30 miles out and I said 'we're staying out here now, guys — we're going to ride this out'. My friends weren't happy and asked why and I said 'because we're safer out here than we are near a coast, particularly a coast we don't know and at night'.

"I knew it was right. But it was a big moment because at the back of my mind I was thinking that my life was one thing, but I also had other people's lives in my hands.

"We had two or three minutes argument and then I said 'stop now, that's it. That's what we're doing.'

"I've always wondered about that moment because I didn't have pips on my shoulder. I was just a guy with two mates. But looking back at it, I enjoyed it as well. I checked my books when I got back and I was right to stay out there, but it wasn't an easy decision."

"The mix of intellect and practical skills that sailing demands is something Hopkins seeks professionally, too.

"You've got to get it right if you're out on the water," he says.

"I like responsibility, I like making decisions and I like being accountable for them. At sea you are."

The 49-year-old admits that this kind of pressure is also what appeals to him about the choppy waters of FE. It's why he left his role as deputy chief executive of the Welsh funding agency in 2012 to return to leadership.

"Although I was a senior civil servant, I wasn't the head of the show. I loved being principal and I like taking responsibility. Even when it goes badly I like being the one who steps up and takes things on . . . and when it goes well, I love sharing it," explains Hopkins.

"I never stopped missing the cut-and-thrust of FE life."

He took up sailing to help him to recover after his mother, Kathleen, died five years ago.

"I was privileged to look after my mum for six months before she died, and oddly it was the best six months' relationship I'd had with her. It was a profound and moving life experience. When she did die I was impacted by it in a way that I just would not have predicted," he says.

Hopkins may not be an Army officer, but he acknowledges that the armed forces has, in many ways, helped to shape him. His father, David, served in the Royal Navy during the war, and was in the army throughout Hopkins' childhood.

An only child, he was born in Newton Abbot, Devon, but the family moved frequently.

"I didn't have time to foster friendships, so I learned to go up to different groups of people and ask to be involved," he says.

"While it might seem a little sad for a child, it's equipped me really well for adult life because I'm comfortable with different people in different settings. It's also given me a restlessness. Part of me wishes I could feel settled, but that restlessness is also a drive to constantly want to improve, to help others, to change things."

> "The sense of making a real difference to people's lives was something I picked up on, even as a young man"

But life changed dramatically when his father was severely injured in a car accident. He lost one leg; the other was badly injured.

"He should have died, really," says Hopkins. "It changed my life, though, and it certainly changed his — one day I had a fit and healthy dad who loved sport, the next day he was, in an old-fashioned way of putting it, crippled. That was a big thing for all of us — me, my mum, and my dad.

"It changed him. He became a bit fierce at times, frustrated, and physically it was never easy for him."

His father left the Army and became the manager of a Goodyear tyre factory in Bolton — and the young Hopkins became a Bolton Wanderers fan.

He says his parents were "quietly proud" when he got into Cardiff University. "I came from a very ordinary background and when my mum and dad saw me wearing a suit I'm sure that they must have thought occasionally 'he's getting above himself'," says Hopkins.

"While my dad never got the opportunity, he had a strong sense for education... he was quietly political, not active, but I remember as a little boy he'd ask me questions every Sunday like who's the Foreign Secretary and who's the Prime Minister?"

It was at Cardiff that Hopkins met future wife Amanda, and discovered his other life-long love, FE.

"I met mature students from the mines and the steelworks who'd come through the FE route. They were into politics and had trade union backgrounds. That stayed with me all my life," explains Hopkins.

His experiences at university inspired him to take up his first job as a general and communications studies teacher, helping a wide range of students to add to their vocational skills. He says he enjoyed allowing them to come into contact with politics, both the content and the process.

"FE colleges are transformational places of liberation, potentially," says Hopkins.

"The sense of making a real difference to people's lives was something I picked up on, even as a young man, and it's something I believe in as a principal."

This mission continued throughout his varied career in FE, as a teacher, as a principal, as a civil servant and into his current role.

"I've moved around and bobbed and weaved but I'm having the best time of my career now," he says.

"The setting really drives me and there's a real sense of moral purpose. The college has it too. Middlesbrough does have some areas of affluence, but there is too much poverty and the college has a major role to play in engaging with that and helping people move from that to living good, prosperous lives. That's a real drive for me. I love it. "



Inset: Mike Hopkins modelling some undies for last year's Pants to Poverty campaign

It's a personal thing

What's your favourite book?
Satish Kumar's No Destination

What did you want to be when you were younger?
A doctor, but I failed my 11-plus. My dad had a serious car accident when I was young and I spent a lot of time seeing him in hospital . . . I guess I wanted to help him by being a doctor

What do you do to switch off from work?
Cycling, a bit of gardening, reading, sailing

If you could invite anyone to a dinner party, living or dead, who would it be?
Buddha, Harold Wilson — he's something of a childhood hero — and Nelson Mandela

What would your super power be?
To travel across time

FE Week Experts

Out of the starting blocks

Bob Harrison reflects on the first meeting of the Further Education Technology Action Group



Matthew Hancock's inaugural gathering of some key people in the worlds of FE and technology was all about action.

More than 20 strong, the membership is an interesting mix of public and private sector providers as well as the usual representatives from colleges, agencies, examination bodies and membership organisations.

The FE minister has a personal interest, stemming partly from his family business interests, which are technology based, his own personal use of social media (he has more than 7,000 followers on Twitter) and his recent visit to India where he was investigating distance and open learning and the growth of MOOCs.

He has set the group the task of advising the government on the potential for emerging technologies to inspire innovations in learning.

> "Will the current analogue mindset and culture stifle the very impetus that Matthew Hancock is keen to create?"

He clearly is interested in how these can be harnessed to drive up the quality, efficiency, and accessibility of FE.

And he was in listening mode for the first meeting, willing to learn about best practice, and how the government could encourage and promote it.

One of the group's key driving forces is co-chair Manoj Badale, the co-founder and managing partner of Blenheim Chalcot, an early stage investment group that manages a portfolio of fast growth ventures in technology, financial services or media.

He took over chairing the inaugural meeting when the minister had to leave to address a gathering of sixth-form college principals and made it clear that he wanted the group to produce outcomes and not just rehearse previous arguments.

The wide-ranging discussion covered all the new technologies relevant to teaching and learning, with an emerging consensus around some key barriers such as funding methodology, leadership and governance, workforce skills and Inspection.

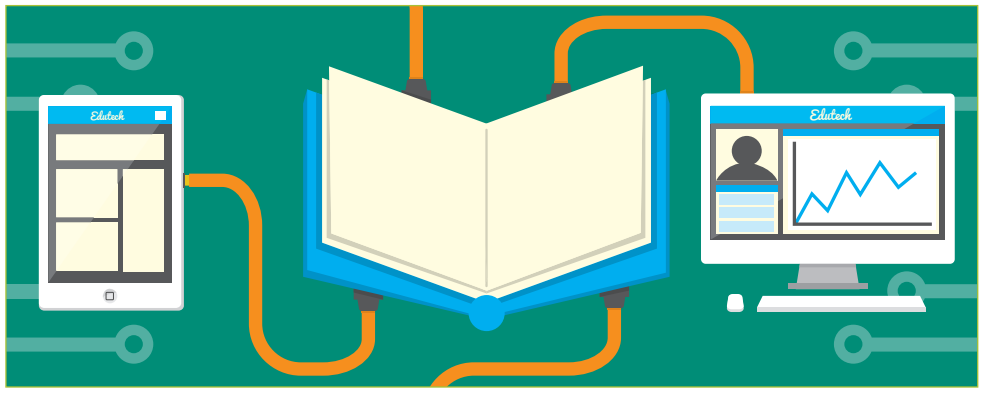
Dick Palmer, chief executive of Norwich City College group and chair of the TEN group of colleges, was pleased with the first meeting. "There is a substantial appetite for the use of technology for learning in FE. Colleges are aware of the potential but there is confusion, anxiety and uncertainty around issues such as funding, assessment and qualifications," he said.

Paul Rolfe, 157 group and Highbury College, was anxious to ensure the learner voice was heard. "There is a lot of expertise and skills within colleges in the student body and it is important that we tap into that," he said.

The first challenge will be to see if there is the ministerial will to provide the "nudges" to the system that will encourage teachers to innovate and take risks using technology to improve learning. Or will the current analogue mindset and culture stifle the very impetus that Matthew Hancock is keen to create?

Time will tell.

Bob Harrison, education adviser for Toshiba Information Systems (UK) Ltd, consultant with National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services and chair of the Teaching Schools Technology Advisory Board



It's the quality that counts

Colleges and schools can work together to provide the impartial advice and guidance that young people need to decide their futures, says Dawn Ward



A damning Education Select Committee report on the quality of careers guidance in schools recently prompted *FE Week* editor Nick Linford to issue a rallying call for colleges to up their game in promoting FE.

David Walrond, the principal of Truro and Penwith College, who addressed the committee, responded, explaining why he thought the emphasis should remain on improving the advice given by schools.

However at Burton and South Derbyshire College we take a different view – colleges and schools can work together to provide quality careers advice and guidance.

Colleges can work collaboratively with local schools to ensure that young people have access to the impartial advice and guidance that they need to decide their next steps.

It's all about working in partnership to do the right thing for our young people.

> "Career Coach ensures that learners are equipped with the vital skills that they need for today's workplace"

Burton and South Derbyshire College has successfully created a co-operative relationship with local schools, ensuring that they see the college as a significant part of the education system.

We have worked together on a countywide Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) group, which includes organising careers events at external venues that allow school pupils to access advice and guidance from the college, sixth forms and a range of other organisations.

In addition to the countywide group, a member of the college's senior leadership team chairs a South Derbyshire focused IAG group with secondary and private sector colleagues.

Burton and South Derbyshire College was also the first college in the UK to provide learners with Career Coach, a website that provides local employment information, advice and guidance, forming a link between college curriculum and occupational opportunities.

The tool has been developed in partnership with American-based Economic Modelling Specialists Inc to support local, regional and national economic development, ensuring that college learners are equipped with the vital skills that they need for today's demanding workplace.

Learners can use the system, which has received excellent feedback from IAG partners, throughout their college journey, from enquiry to exit interview

Career Coach allows young people to learn about the number of jobs available and salary ranges in their chosen industry, along with how their course relates to sectors and roles.

It also includes a CV builder, while a sector-based search function gives learners an insight into what employers are looking for.

The college is now rolling the system out to South Derbyshire schools to ensure that pupils aged under 16 can make informed decisions about their futures.

About half the schools have now taken up this offer.

I truly believe that schools and colleges can work together to create an open environment in which young people can access the full range of information available before they embark on their careers, choosing the route that is right for them.

At Burton and South Derbyshire College, we are achieving our vision of effective partnership in an IAG and are encouraging colleges to share best practice in providing innovative and effective careers advice alongside schools.

Dawn Ward OBE, chief executive and principal of Burton and South Derbyshire College

FE Week Experts

Get past the rhetoric and down to business

Learning by doing should be valued equally with academic learning, says David Harbourne. But vocational education first must meet the highest possible standards

Education must provide a wide range of knowledge, skills and attributes that are best represented by a spread of qualifications of equal status and value. There are, after all, many paths to success.

Vocational qualifications (VQs) – a crucial offering in our education system – therefore must meet the highest possible standards. If not, we'll never see any parity of esteem between vocational qualifications and more traditional, academic routes.

The Department for Education's recent proposals to reform VQs for 16 to 19-year-olds highlights a process for deciding which qualifications should count in future performance tables, without any mention (quite rightly) of numbers or targets.

Unfortunately, the accompanying press release wasn't quite so encouraging, opting for the addition of some seemingly random statistics. This provided the media with an easy headline about the scrapping of 'Mickey Mouse courses', a line that they fell for, hook, line and sinker.

The press release talked about potentially culling thousands of level three qualifications from post-16 performance tables, giving the impression that the majority of current vocational courses are poor quality. This simply isn't the case.

For one thing, the best current qualifications are taken by tens of thousands of young people every year with great success – albeit often without the recognition they so richly deserve.

These qualifications are more than likely to continue under the new rules subject, in some cases, to minor tweaks.

> "The opportunity to study technical subjects should be offered to all students, not just a few"

But other qualifications, taken by very few people, remain extremely valuable. For example, we train few farriers each year – only three colleges in England currently offer farriery – but there is no question of dropping such specialist courses or abandoning these specialist qualifications.

To add some meat to the press release, there was an additional announcement about the development of new engineering and construction qualifications to replace principal learning qualifications.

The development of high-quality qualifications is, of course, something that we fully endorse. But it was rather secondhand news, the announcement having been made by the Chancellor during a visit to Rolls-Royce a few weeks ago.

But as many a politician will tell you, if you've got good news it's best to announce it as many times as you can.

The real story is the plan for clear and consistent standards for judging current and future qualifications.

We welcome this wholeheartedly it sends out a clear message that the government is willing to listen to views on how vocational learning can play an important role in education and how we can ensure young people leave school with the specific skills that employers need.

We are in the midst of a skills shortage in the UK with many employers saying that they struggle to fill positions.

As our Six Steps for Change policy document sets out (www.edge.co.uk/six-steps-for-change), we feel strongly that the opportunity to study technical subjects should be offered to all students, not just a few.



Learning by doing should be valued equally with academic learning, and all technical, practical and vocational education should be high quality and, of course, valued by employers.

Encouragingly, the Department for Education's plans give us confidence that we can work together to establish a new qualification system that will last the test of time. All young people, whatever their abilities and interests, should leave the system with the ambition and necessary skills to succeed – as well as with the skills that the economy needs.

David Harbourne, director of policy and research at the Edge Foundation

Advertorial

An 'end-to-end' professional development



The Credit Services Association is determined that debt collection become an industry with real career prospects, writes Stephen Morley

Debt is set to top the agenda for some time to come. Therefore, it is paramount that talented youngsters are attracted into the credit services industry and that those involved in collecting debt are recognised as true professionals.

The Credit Services Association (CSA) is the only UK-wide association for businesses specialising in debt collection, tracing and related debt buying, and selling services. Members range from high street banks to credit reference agencies, debt buyers and funders, and own and/or collect around £60bn of consumer credit receivables.

Though it may have a large slice of the debt collection cake, the association is committed to enhancing the professional identity of the credit industry. So in partnership with the National Open College Network (NOCN), it plans to give the credit industry an 'end-to-end' professional development pathway that will reflect the financial sector's diversity.

With that goal in mind, NOCN has already proved its worth. Its hugely successful level three diploma for the debt collection industry has led the CSA to develop level four and five qualifications this year.

But it all starts with the development of a level two apprenticeship, which will give CSA members the chance to recruit local talent and offer youngsters real job opportunities.

This first stage apprenticeship, aimed at encouraging youngsters to select the debt industry as a career choice, will soon become a reality as Ofqual has now approved our recently developed practical qualification for debt collection.

Every qualification has a defined and definite purpose. The level two apprenticeship, for example, will be aimed at encouraging youngsters into the industry while providing our members with an affordable financial recruitment and training solution.

> "The essential ingredient to any successful learning and development strategy is the stakeholder"

The level three diploma, our benchmark professional standard, will become more widely available as we look to finalise a new funding partnership in the coming months.

The level four qualification, meanwhile, will be aimed at developing the talent of the future, whereas level five will focus on compliance and provide professional recognition for compliance officers and middle and senior managers.

We recognise that we still have some way to go. But our current level three diploma, coupled with our level two modern apprenticeship, and level four and five qualifications, means that the journey has begun. But it needs to be driven by the membership.

Hopefully as employees become more qualified, then individual organisations will be able to measure a tangible return on investment in having a more proficient, valued and potentially valuable workforce.

And let's not forget that the essential ingredient to any successful learning and development strategy is the stakeholder. We therefore should not forget the importance of the student.

But equally important is our external partnerships with NOCN, our awarding organisation partner, and the Financial Skills Partnership, the sector skills council for the financial sector.

Stephen Morley, head of learning and development at the Credit Services Association

National APPRENTICESHIP WEEK ROUND-UP

Cameron's 'new norm' wisdom

Eleanor Radford
@EleanorRadford

The Prime Minister wants apprenticeships to become the "new norm for young people," with work-based training sitting "at the heart of our mission to rebuild the economy".

Speaking at a Mercedes-Benz base in Milton Keynes (see right) during the sixth National Apprenticeship Week, he called on employers, educators and MPs to expand apprenticeships for young people.

"They are at the heart of our mission to rebuild the economy, giving young people the chance to learn a trade, to build their careers, and create a truly world-class, high-skilled workforce that can compete and thrive in the fierce global race that we are in," said David Cameron.

"We need to challenge ourselves to go even further — that is why I want it to be the new norm for young people to either go to university or into an apprenticeship.

"We need to look at how we can expand apprenticeship opportunities so that they are available to all young people who are ready and eager to take them up, and aspire to get ahead in life."

Martin Doel, chief executive of Association of Colleges, said his members would "happily meet the extra demand".

"There are obviously questions around how the new expanded apprenticeships will be funded and who will take ownership of them," he said. "To that end, we will work with government to establish the best way forward."

Graham Hoyle, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP), also said that his group was "ready to respond" to the government's call.

"With AELP members already delivering over 70 per cent of apprenticeships in England, independent training providers are ready to respond to the Prime Minister's call by lending their frontline expertise on how to develop, improve and increase the number of apprenticeships," he said.

He added that the AELP was pushing for at least one teacher from every secondary school to undertake work experience with a provider and go on to champion apprenticeships within their school.

Meanwhile, Shadow FE Minister Gordon Marsden argued in Parliament that public procurement funds should be used to boost apprenticeships.

"Labour has demanded the government uses the money that it already spends on public procurement to create new apprenticeship opportunities," he said.

He claimed that for every £1m spent on public procurement, at least one apprenticeship should be created.

"This sort of approach is essential to help the economy grow, if we are to compete as a country," he told MPs.

He said Sheffield City Council had identified that it could create 233 places for apprenticeships through public procurement.

"This approach has won the backing of the Business, Innovation and Skills committee and builds on what Labour did in government to ensure that apprenticeships were offered on



the delivery of the Olympic Park and Crossrail, while Labour local authorities are also leading the way in using procurement to boost apprenticeships," said Mr Marsden.

"FE Minister Matthew Hancock has frequently talked of how apprenticeships are at the heart of his government's skills strategy.

"If that is indeed the case, why won't he give them a much-needed shot in the arm and back our sensible proposals to use the money government already spends to boost apprenticeship numbers?"

He said Labour leader Ed Miliband had outlined "the real difference" that the plan would make in creating 33,000 new apprenticeships.

"This is a key test for ministers at a time when there are almost one million young people out of work and the number of apprenticeships for 16 to 18-year-olds has fallen," he added.



And the prize for hardest working politician this week goes to Matthew Hancock.

The FE Minister was up at 5.30am filleting fish at Billingsgate market with apprentices in East London before dashing off to take part in events throughout the day, finally making an appearance on BBC's News Night at 11.30pm.

In an effort to scale back on the fish puns *FE Week* just wanted to say: "Well done Mr Hancock, you reelly busted a gut during National Apprenticeship Week."

Traineeships 'will start in September'

Shane Mann
@Shanermann

The first traineeships, the new government programme targeted at young people to help them acquire work-related skills and attitudes, are on track to start in September this year, says FE minister Matthew Hancock.

He told training providers, business leaders, apprentices and awarding bodies at a Voice of Apprentices conference in London last week that the traineeships were a "personal priority".

Several of the 300 delegates raised concerns around the implementation of the traineeships, their purpose and what they would mean for apprenticeships.

Mr Hancock said that traineeships were a "very important part of the picture".

"This is a personal priority of mine as minister. Traineeships are an important part of work to increase the rigour and quality of apprenticeships. We need to ensure that we provide a provision for those that need support to get a job, to get into the position of applying and holding down that job," he said.

"We have been very consultative around the introduction of traineeships. I know that there is plenty of good practice out there from many providers and I acknowledge there is lots that I still am not aware of.

> "The forthcoming consultation will more or less explain how we will do it"

"But let me be clear, I don't want to get in the way of this good provision. I want to support it through traineeships and bring together some of the different strands under an umbrella that also supports progression into apprenticeships and into a job.

"The timings are tight for their implementation, but they will form an integral part of the future architecture of apprenticeships."

The minister also promised a further immediate consultation.

"Our first consultation, launched earlier this year in January, looked at what we wanted to do and posed questions about how we might achieve this. The forthcoming consultation will more or less explain how we will do it and ask the sector for comments on those plans, he said.

"I am very keen that we consult a wide and varying audience on how we design and build, what I think is a very important improvement."

The Voice of Apprentices conference, the third of its kind and the largest yet, celebrated apprenticeships and the positive effect they have on individuals and business.

It was chaired by *FE Week* editor Nick Linford and included more than 24 speakers from across FE and industry, including several apprentices.

During the various presentations and Q&A sessions, delegates and speakers shared their experiences of apprenticeships and their concerns and questions for their future.

This year's conference, organised by Lindsay McCurdy of Apprenticeships 4 England, was held at the capital's Tower Hotel.



Matthew Hancock addresses the conference in London

Adonis talks of 'apprenticeship revolution'

Eleanor Radford
@EleanorRadford

UCAS should be the "principal route" into apprenticeships to ensure they were as "accessible and credible" as universities, Lord Adonis told a packed conference.

The organisation responsible for managing applications to higher education was "up for it" if the government was, said the Labour politician, and academic during a speech at Unionlearn's annual apprenticeship conference to mark National Apprenticeship Week.

"I don't think there is a single thing that deserves more attention in this country than apprenticeships," he told delegates.

"We need a revolution in apprenticeships as we did in schools in the late 1980s. We now have a schools system of which we can be very proud — we will only have achieved this in apprenticeships when there are as many available as there are higher education places."

Young people wanted to "earn and learn" not "beg and borrow", he said, comparing the earning power of apprentices with the debts incurred by students on university courses.

His message to the government was clear — that it should lead by example.

"In the whole time I was in government I don't recall ever having an under 21-year-old working for me. The jobs didn't require graduate skills, so what was happening," said Lord Adonis

Last year, half of 16 government departments had no apprentices and, of those that did, none was under 21. The Department of Business, Innovation and Skills had just one apprentice.

He urged the civil service to create more apprenticeship opportunities, adding that of about 800,000 school leavers, on average 300,000 went on to university, with just 129,000 taking up apprenticeships [last year], leaving "hundreds of thousands" not going into any form of training.

"If UCAS were the apprenticeships and university route you might get people applying for both," he said.

A spokesperson for UCAS told *FE Week* it was "happy to consider ways" to "add value" to the apprenticeship application process but that it had not received any request from the government to explore this.

Gila Sacks, head of the apprenticeship unit at BIS, told the conference that the government had responded "very positively" to entrepreneur Doug Richard's well-documented report into apprenticeships.

It must work to "increase awareness" of apprenticeships, although this had already started as schools now had to provide independent information, advice and guidance on careers.



Lord Adonis (centre) meeting with apprentices. From left: Charlotte Appleyard, 22 Kirsty Downs and Claire Cordon, both 21

She said the results of a consultation on how this was working would be reported in June and urged members of the sector to put forward their views.

Four young apprentices spoke at the event, highlighting the best bits of their vocational route.

Kirsty Downs, a business administration apprentice at St Edmundsbury Borough Council, said she had been taking a gap year and was about to start university when she was offered the training opportunity.

"They give me study time for my foundation degree. Rather than getting in debt and partying at university, I earn money and spend it on what I want while getting experience doing events organising, which I was going to study at university," the 21-year-old from Suffolk told delegates.

"I love my apprenticeship and my friends who've gone to university are jealous."

More than 800 events took place around the country throughout the sixth National Apprenticeship Week. Highlights included a job swap between FE minister Matthew Hancock and Jenny Westworth, a former BAE apprentice who now works on the final assembly line for the Typhoon aircraft at her factory near Preston, and young apprentices meeting David Cameron at No 10 to discuss workplace training.



DF



WorldSkills selection results

The final UK team to compete at WorldSkills 2013 in Leipzig has been announced, with more than 30 youngsters set to take on the best in the world in July.



Kirk Croft, 18, from South Leicestershire College, has been selected to represent TeamUK in painting and decorating

Skill	Name	Training Provider / College
Architectural Stonemasonry	Robert Broomsgrove	Weymouth College
Aircraft Maintenance	Ben Tullett	RAF Odiham
Autobody Repair	Matthew Quinn	Riverpark Training
Automobile Technology	Alex Knight	Honda Institute
Beauty Therapy	Awaiting announcement	
Bricklaying	Ashley Terron	Warrington Collegiate College
Cabinet Making	George Callow	Chichester College
Car Painting	Gary Greer	Riverpark Training
Carpentry	Philip Glasgow	South West College Omagh
CNC Milling	Benjamin Shaw	Central Nottingham College
CNC Turning	Ben Anderson	Training 2000
Confectioner / Pastry Cook	Stephen Smith	Westminster Kingsway College
Cooking	Louisa May Matthews	Worcester College of Technology
Electrical Installations	Awaiting announcement	
Floristry	Chloe Woolf	Moulton College
Hairdressing	Hannah Clague	Red Edge Training Company
IT Network Administration	Nehmaan Ahmed	Barnfield College
Joinery	David Beattie	South West College Omagh
Landscape Gardening	Matthew Bradley	CAFRE Greenmount Campus
Landscape Gardening	Ewan Sewell	Bishop Burton College
Manufacturing Team	Daniel Gebherd	Bradford College
Manufacturing Team	Andrew Maguire	Bradford University
Manufacturing Team	George Moffat	Bradford College
Mechanical Engineering CAD	Andrew Craig	Motherwell College
Mechatronics	David Cargill	Northern Regional College
Mechatronics	James Overend	Northern Regional College
Painting and Decorating	Kirk Croft	South Leicestershire College
Plastering and Dry Wall Systems	Kenneth Wilson	Belfast Metropolitan College
Plumbing & Heating	Ashley Bainbridge	Salford College
Refrigeration and Airconditioning	Awaiting announcement	
Sheet Metal Technology	Matt Page	KMF Precision Sheet Metal Ltd
Visual Merchandising	Sarah Smithers	East Berkshire College
Wall and Floor Tiling	Mark Woods	South West College Omagh
Welding	Alastair Wilson	Doosan Power Systems

FE Week campus round-up

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Bosses swap jobs with apprentices



Apprentice Robyn May, 19, and MediaCom CEO Karen Blackett

Chief executives and directors in companies across the UK recently swapped jobs with apprentices to mark National Apprenticeship Week.

MediaCom boss Karen Blackett swapped roles with marketing and communications apprentice Robyn May, 19.

Karen said: "It was good to go back to the floor. I was impressed to see how integral Robyn is to her team; she's clearly a valued member who has real work and real responsibility. Chief executives should do this more often."

Robyn said: "Going from apprentice to chief executive is a huge jump. I've certainly had to brush up my communications skills today, speaking to directors and managing partners.

"I was really nervous this morning but I've learnt that it's good to push myself and that I can do something if I put my mind to it."

The swaps were filmed for a new online TV channel, apprentice.tv.

The bright sparks of Sheffield



Sheffield City College media make-up students show off their creations

Around 70 students at Sheffield City College have had their achievements recognised with 'spark awards' presented during an evening of music, dancing and skills.

A crowd of local VIPs and parents were wowed by dancing and music displays, with catering and hospitality students whipping up canapés.

The college's glass atrium became a runway for aviation students to demonstrate their skills to music, and for media make-up students to show off their creativity with make-up based on cities around the world.

Principal Julie Byrne said: "It was fantastic evening. We are proud of our students, and our staff who have supported them on their journey. We want to inspire more young people to discover their career aspirations."

Want your college or training provider to appear on these pages?

Send your stories with pictures to news@feweek.co.uk including names, ages and course of students where applicable



Apprentice Gregg Rolfe, 27, with loaves to sell to college staff

Novice bakers rise to the challenge

London bakery apprentices are providing fresh bread, rolls and buns three days a week for staff at their college.

The apprentices, who work for Morrisons supermarket while studying at Barking &Dagenham College, have opened a staff shop to give them the chance to develop their skills.

Some of their specialty products sell out within minutes.

Apprentice Gregg Rolfe, 27, said: "I never took things seriously at school and left with only a few good grades. I have been working at Morrisons for five years now, working in the fruit and veg department.

"Then, last year I was approached by the store manager about being a baker and I jumped at the chance to learn a skilled job whilst at work.

"Hopefully I'll become a bakery manager in a few years."



Matthew Hancock MP takes in the view from Lowestoft College's ship's bridge simulator

Lowestoft passes muster for minister

When FE minister Matthew Hancock dropped in on a Suffolk college, students soon showed him that everything was more than shipshape.

The minister was treated to whistle-stop tour of Lowestoft College's specialist engineering and maritime facilities, including a 19m wind turbine tower for training wind farm workers, and a simulator of a ship's bridge.

Principal Simon Summers said: "We were very pleased Mr Hancock spent time with us and was able to see what we offer.

"By talking to apprentices and students he was able to gain a good insight into the issues facing them and see just how committed they are to their studies."

The Minister with Waveney MP Peter Aldous and Suffolk County Council leader Mark Bee, also watched uniformed services students perform an emergency evacuation drill in the training tank, and later answered questions from travel and tourism learners.

FE Week campus round-up

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Read all about it in Richmond



Richmond upon Thames College students Patrycja Janik, Media Sheybani, Mitra Shamshiri and Jemima Venn enjoy the first edition of Celebrate magazine

Students at a London college are hitting the headlines. But they haven't got the tabloids on their trail — the headlines are in their own magazine that they can get hot off the press.

The Richmond upon Thames College learners can read all the latest news about their campus and their achievements in Celebrate, Richmond's new magazine.

The free magazine, which has become a must-have item across campus, allows students to gain recognition for their work and dedication, on and off campus.

The launch edition features news stories about award winners, sporting triumphs and charity fundraising, as well as show reviews, an interview with the student union president and features about college graduates.

The college is also hoping to launch a PDF edition on its website from the summer term.

Flashbacks to a bygone era



Photography students from left: Rebecca Brown, Lauren Taylor and Roberta Brackenbury with archive pictures in the Learning Resource Centre at Doncaster College

Young photographers are helping Doncaster Archives to uncover local history.

BTec national diploma students at Doncaster College are printing photographs from glass plate negatives made as far back as the turn of the last century by local photographers Luke Bagshaw and Edgar Scrivens.

Student Lauren Taylor, 18, from Bessacarr, said: "It's exciting to see the pictures appear in the developer."

The photos show significant moments in the town's history, such as the construction of the canal and St George's bridge, and the unveiling of the war memorial in 1923.

Roberta Brackenbury, 19, from Haxey, said: "It's quite scary dealing with glass negatives that have a lot of history behind them. We handle them with great care as we're aware that they are breakable – and irreplaceable."

Want your college or training provider to appear on these pages?

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Joshua collecting his award from the Princess Royal

Joshua proves he's a cut above a rest

The Princess Royal met the best trainee butcher in the country at the Meat Training Council's annual prizegiving.

Joshua Brown, 21, from Wolverhampton, collected the new Best Meat Apprentice of the Year award and £250 after being nominated by Telford College where he is studying food production.

Joshua, an apprentice butcher at Essington Fruit Farm, said: "It feels great. I left school with very few qualifications so I didn't really have many prospects.

"They took a chance with me here at the farm, and three years later I'm still here and I love it."

Richard Simkin, joint owner of Essington Fruit Farm, said, "He came in with no experience at all. He's learned all the butchery cutting skills and is now serving on the counter.

"He's such a nice lad, with an endearing smile. The customers love him."



Middlesbrough College Principal Mike Hopkins wears the logo with pride with staff and students

Middlesbrough principal bares his soles

A North Yorkshire principal showed his college's support for fair trade by putting his foot down – in paint.

Mike Hopkins, principal and at Middlesbrough College, painted his soles blue and green to match Fairtrade's Take a Step in 2013 campaign logo.

He said: "Raising awareness of Fairtrade and the plight of farmers in the developing world is just one way that we can help to promote equality and diversity."

Students and staff also supported Fairtrade fortnight, a celebration aimed at raising awareness of a charity that helps more than a million farmers around the world get better prices for their produce. The fortnight ended on March 10.

Mr Hopkins added: "The college calendar is packed with events and activities that promote social understanding . . . the students respond tremendously to each and every one of those activities. This is a great cause and one that we are only too happy to support."

Classmates sign up as bone marrow donors

FEATURED CAMPUS ROUND-UP

A 17-year-old Havering student is determined to end the fear of donating stem cells, reports Rebecca Cooney

A student in London has launched a campaign that could potentially save her mother's life.

Karen Thompson has been told that her only chance is to find a donor to provide a stem-cell transplant, so daughter Hannah, 17, organised a recruitment event for the Anthony Nolan Trust donor register at Havering College, where she studies level three BTec graphic design.

She said: "The trust said the people they most needed were 16 to 30-year-olds. But when I spoke to my friends, they said they were worried it would be painful.

"They didn't know much about it and that made them scared, so I wanted to get the message out."

Karen, a healthcare worker, had aggressive non-Hodgkin's lymphoma diagnosed in 2011. She was offered a stem cell transplant using her own cells when chemotherapy was unsuccessful.

"Unfortunately, there was a rogue cell and within three months of having the transplant, the cancer came back," she said. "My only chance now is a donor."

Hannah, Karen, and Hannah's sister, Emily, 14, spent the day at the college talking to students about donating bone marrow and encouraging them to sign up for the Anthony Nolan register.

Hannah said: "Most people were very interested. Everyone knows someone who's affected by cancer so a lot of people had time to listen."

Students' responses to the event – held on Hannah's birthday – were enthusiastic, with 55 joining the register by filling in a form and giving a saliva sample.

Hannah said: "I've been to events where they've only had 10 people, so ours was definitely a success."

Karen said: "Hannah is on cloud nine – she said it could not have been a better present."

She added: "I don't only need support for myself. I am aiming to help other people like me who are looking for donors.

"People from black, Asian and other ethnic minority backgrounds have a poor success rate as they are under-represented on the register. I am really pleased that we had so many mixed-race people coming forward. I was really chuffed."

The day was a big achievement for Hannah, who admitted that she sometimes found communication difficult.

She said: "I think my friends are really impressed I pulled it off. I'm not normally very good at talking to people. This has definitely helped, although it wasn't an easy thing to explain."



From left: Hannah Thompson with mum Karen and sister Emily

Emily has also boosted the Anthony Nolan register by starting a Facebook campaign.

Karen said: "Their dad Gary and I are incredibly proud of both Hannah and Emily for what they are doing."

Hannah added: "I'd say to anyone they should definitely sign up, It's not just my mum they could be helping, it's anyone who needs a transplant."

Anyone aged between 16 and 30 should visit www.anthonynolan.org/register

Grimbsy students mark Diversity Week



From left: Hannah Guy, 17, Mary Massie, 16, and Kate Renton 20, all entry level animal care students taking part in the Indian experience workshop with teacher Sunita Patel

Students and staff at Grimsby Institute recently heard Humberside and North East Lincolnshire Police officers explain a hate crime – and how it is investigated.

The talk was one of several activities at the college to mark Diversity Week. Students also listened to an an inspirational talk from Paralympian Jamie Carter, and enjoyed activities that explored other cultures, such as Indian dancing and traditional Hindu Rangoli artwork.

Entry level sports learner Shane Watkins, 17, helped to paint a mural illustrating traditions and customs from different countries.

He said: "It's been really good because I would never normally have seen a project through.

"I chose England, which turns out be most popular for things like black cabs, David Beckham and Rod Stewart. I've learnt a lot – and the finished mural is really colourful."



Bolton College learners showing off their custom paint job

Pimped car raises £1,650 for Comic Relief

Manchester motor students transformed a secondhand car with a Red Nose-themed makeover.

The body and finish department from Bolton College, in partnership with Bolton KIA, gave the car its new look as part of its annual Comic Relief 'pimp my Part-ex' fundraiser.

Student Levi Cain, 18, said: "We were all excited to take part in the challenge. It's great that we get to practise our skills and raise money for charity at the same time.

"We're really pleased with the end results - hopefully the new owner is too."

The finished car was auctioned for charity, raising £1,650.

Motor vehicle refinishing lecturer Roy Curme said: "We're very grateful to Bolton KIA for allowing us to participate in such a fantastic initiative.

"It's enabled our students to not only help an extremely worthy cause, but also to gain hands-on experience."

FE Week campus round-up

sponsored by empra™



Current Stourbridge BTec extended diploma in sports student and Staffordshire county golf player Kathryn Brookes, 18

Stourbridge golf academy tees off

Aspiring golfers will be able to study for a sports qualification alongside professional golf coaching when a Birmingham college opens its new golf academy.

Stourbridge College, which has teamed up with Hagley Golf and Country Club, has already started recruitment for the course, due to run from September.

David Faulkner, golf co-ordinator at Stourbridge, said: "After leaving school, young people are at a high risk of dropping out of sport. It's hoped that courses like this will encourage more golfers to continue with the sport."

He also hoped that the programme would help to break down traditional barriers to entering the sport.

Paul Johnson, head professional at Hagley, said: "We're keen to develop the next generation of golfers – and students will benefit from making use of our excellent facilities as part of their course."

Network opens regional offices



New NOCN office staff from Birmingham and Bristol

An organisation that aims to give people the skills to get a job or an apprenticeship has rolled out new regional offices.

The National Open College Network (NOCN), originally based in Sheffield, has opened offices in Bristol, Birmingham, London, Peterlee and Warrington.

Managing director Graham Hasting-Evans said: "This year looks set to be an exciting one for us. As a not-for-profit organisation, we're able to invest our resources into developing not only our existing products but introduce new and improved ones."

The organisation works with 2,500 other centres across the UK, but said having more regional offices would help it to support learners, providers and employers.

Mr Hasting-Evans added: "We've made significant improvements to how we work, meaning customers now get not only an improved service but great value for money too.

"We're confident our new way of working will be beneficial to all."

Nick nails a staff post

A student with autism is inspiring students and staff at Weston College, reports Rebecca Cooney

When Nick Youde came to Weston College at 16, he was seeking help to manage his autism. Six years later and he is a valued member of staff.

Nick, who hails from Nailsea, was originally on a two-year extension studies course to develop his basic skills in English, maths and other subjects with a vocational focus.

He soon discovered a talent and aptitude for carpentry, and decided to enrol on a level one diploma course in carpentry and joinery.

He moved on to a level two diploma course in site carpentry and, eventually, a level three diploma joinery course.

Adam Bridewell, the college's maintenance operations technician, said: "Nick has had quite a journey.

"When he started the construction course, his autism was something different for his peers. But by working with the specialist support at the college, it has been a good experience for both Nick and his classmates."

Nick said: "As long as there is demand for my work here – which there is – I'm very happy.

"I came to Weston College when I was 16 and I've never left. It's a great place to be."

In September last year he decided to broaden his skills by enrolling on a level two diploma course in maintenance operations.

His positive attitude and determination to succeed impressed his tutors at the college's Construction and Engineering Centre of Excellence (CECE) so much that, when an opportunity came up for an apprenticeship with the college, he was advised to apply.

He began his new role in January this year. Lead lecturer in maintenance operations Shaun Canniford said: "We felt he would benefit tremendously from some work experience and an apprenticeship seemed the ideal route.

"He is doing very well and he has quickly become a valuable and inspirational member of college personnel. His development has been nothing short of phenomenal."

As well as providing general maintenance cover around the CECE, and acting as an informal mentor to students on various CECE courses, the 23-year-old has tackled painting and decorating, and brickwork and plastering, skills that will supplement his expertise as a carpenter.

He said: "My autism has its challenges. I'm probably not the speediest person here but you don't get points for being speedy in this job and I am very thorough in everything I do."

Nick's apprenticeship will last for two years.

"After that, and if I play my cards right, I'm hoping I will be given a permanent job with Weston College," he said.

"Nothing would please me more. I'm happy here and I feel safe, which is important."

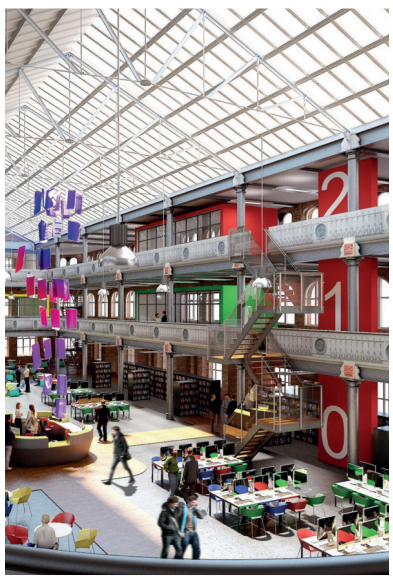


Weston College apprentice Nick Youde hard at work

Leeds City College

SENIOR DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

SALARY: RANGE FROM £100K – £125K



This post provides a unique leadership opportunity as Senior Deputy Principal at Leeds City College, one of the largest and most successful colleges in the sector. The College has over 1,700 staff, 40,000 students and an annual group turnover of over £90 million.

As one of the most exciting and innovative colleges in the sector, Leeds City College is at the forefront of its local and regional agendas and is a significant national influencer. In order to succeed with its ambitious plans for the future, the College is seeking to appoint an exceptional individual with talent, energy and vision. The successful candidate will deliver outstanding service and ensure that innovative learning and teaching is at the heart of all of the College's activity.

The right candidate will also provide significant strategic leadership, reporting to the Principal & Chief Executive, Peter Roberts. If you would like to discuss this role with Peter on an informal basis, please contact Sara Porter on 0113 284 6236. Alternatively, you are welcome to make an appointment to speak with Simon Graham, Managing Director of College Leadership Services by calling 0115 911 1117.

College Leadership Services
Expertise in FE

THE CLOSING DATE FOR THIS POST IS: 12NOON ON TUESDAY 2ND APRIL 2013. INITIAL INTERVIEWS WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY 18TH APRIL 2013.

We are working with College Leadership Services on this important appointment.
Please contact Helen Anderson for an application pack: handerson@collegeleadership.co.uk
or 0115 911 1117, or visit www.collegeleadership.co.uk/current_appointments.asp
for further information about this post.

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play your part
leedscitycollege.ac.uk

Deputy Principal, Curriculum and Quality:

c.£80k + benefits

CENTRALSUSSEXCOLLEGE

Could you be **central** to our success?

Central Sussex College is an ambitious and forward-looking College that serves the economically buoyant Gatwick Diamond area. Serving over 11,000 students across our five central Sussex campuses, we are seeking an exceptional individual to work with our new Principal, Sarah Wright to ensure that the College delivers its vision of supporting aspiration and achievement.

As a key role within the College's Senior Management Team, we are looking for someone who will drive the development of our curriculum offer with the passion and commitment to deliver excellence.

The successful individual will have broad curriculum knowledge, a strong focus on quality and the ability to demonstrate inspirational leadership of curriculum teams to enable them to develop, grow and raise their own expectations.

We are working in partnership with College Leadership Services on this important appointment.

Please contact Helen Anderson for an application pack:
handerson@collegeleadership.co.uk
or 0115 911 1117, or visit www.collegeleadership.co.uk/current_appointments.asp

The closing date for this post is 12pm on Tuesday 2nd April 2013.
Interviews will be held on Thursday 18th and Friday 19th April 2013.

College Leadership Services
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Together we've got a great deal to offer

Principal c. £80k

Islington Sixth Form Consortium brings together the expertise and experience of four schools creating a uniquely vibrant and diverse learning environment for students, and a place of real professional opportunity for our staff. IC6 was established in 2004 and is the joint sixth forms of Central Foundation Boys' School, Highbury Grove School, Highbury Fields School and St Aloysius College. With over 700 students and 60 courses to choose from we have firmly established ourselves as an outstanding provider of post 16 education.

We are extremely proud of our achievements, especially the care and guidance we provide to students to prepare them for higher education and employment. The consortium approach means that students can access facilities and expertise from each of the partner schools all of which have their own specialisms.

We recognise that the future presents change and challenge as well as significant opportunities and we are looking for a visible leader with the strength and vision to sustain our reputation for quality and excellence. This is an exciting opportunity to lead a truly innovative partnership and be at the forefront of post 16 provision.

To find out more please visit **www.leadic6.co.uk**. For an informal and confidential discussion please contact Veena Murray or Phil Watt at Navigate on **0844 800 5300**.

Closing date: 22nd April 2013.

navigate

IC6 ISLINGTON SIXTH FORM CONSORTIUM

GRIMSBY INSTITUTE GROUP

Hull College Group

Learner Quality Improvement Trainer and Developer - Ref: G446

Full Time
Fixed term until July 2015
£22,000 per annum

This is an exciting opportunity to contribute towards the quality improvement agenda with two of the largest and most successful Education providers in the UK.

We are looking for an enthusiastic and motivated individual to work across both organisations in providing training and development of our electronic learner monitoring and support package, Pro Monitor. You will be a team player with excellent ICT and communication and customer service skills. Employed by Grimsby Institute, your time will be spent working with colleagues in both Hull College and Grimsby Institute campuses and will involve developing the package and delivering training to teaching and support staff.

For an informal discussion about this post please contact Margaret Woodcock, Director of Quality Improvement, Grimsby Institute Group on 01472 311222 ext 269.

Closing date: Noon 22nd March 2013

Download an application form at:
www.latestvacancies.com/grimsby

POSITIVE ABOUT DISABLED PEOPLE

buxton college | UNIVERSITY of DERBY | leek college

Buxton and Leek College, part of University of Derby

A NEW College and a unique challenge!

Head of Business Innovation and Partnerships

Salary up to £50,000 plus bonus

The Role: This is an exceptional opportunity to be part of a newly formed curriculum management team leading and inspiring staff in the College's vision to become an outstanding provider of education, training and work-based learning. You will take the lead in driving and growing our employer responsive provision and in developing and overseeing external partnerships. We are looking for a committed and enthusiastic business manager with a proven track record of sustained growth whilst ensuring high quality student experience and success.

The Context: Buxton and Leek Colleges have merged to form an exciting new entity within the University of Derby Group. Combined, we have almost 4,000 students and revenue of almost £10m.

The outline intention is both to strengthen the FE brand in the region and to take full advantage of a co-ordinated approach to provision, to the greater benefit of students, communities and employers. Operating as a single college, the new institution operates from sites at both Buxton and Leek and also has provision based at Derby.

Buxton and Leek College is in the process of developing a new identity. At the same time it embodies the Values of the University of Derby Group with particular regard to Quality, Valuing People, Customer Focus, Opportunity and Openness and Challenge and Innovation.

If you would like an informal discussion about the post please contact Mary Blauciak, Vice Principal, via m.blauciak@derby.ac.uk or by telephone 01298 330688.

Closing date: 2nd April 2013 Interview date: 10 April 2013

For further information and to apply on-line visit our website www.derby.ac.uk/jobs

minicom: 01332 591685

Valuing diversity, promoting equality

www.derby.ac.uk/jobs

Warwickshire College

Gazelle Colleges Group

Director of Estates

Location: Leamington
Salary: **£54,959 - £59,907 per annum**
Reference: ES86

Closing date Sunday 24 March 2013

Do you have significant and successful senior management experience in property and/or estates management in a large organisation? We are looking for an innovative and proactive individual to lead, manage and motivate the Estates team to deliver the highest service standards that enhance the student and staff experience and support the delivery of the College's strategic objectives.

Ideal candidates will have experience of leading change management projects, have commercial and financial acumen, and have the ability to champion change and translate the College's design vision into practice.

Apply at **warwickshire.ac.uk**

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The University of Nottingham
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Djanogly Learning Trust

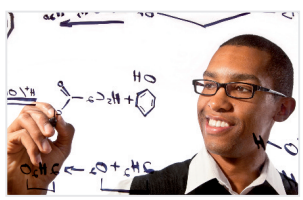
TOSHIBA
Leading Innovation

Help us shape tomorrow's workforce

Principal (Designate) Salary: £100k+benefits

Are you the right person to lead the new Nottingham University Academy of Science and Technology (NUAST) in developing tomorrow's foremost technologists, scientists and business stars?

We are looking for someone who shares our vision of an educational establishment that sets the highest expectations, delivers excellent learning and equips and prepares talented and aspirational young people in the East Midlands, who are capable of national and international careers.



You will need to have the drive and ability to create a state-of-the-art learning environment. A successful track record of creating strong business partnerships is also essential as you will be working with employers who are helping to lead and inform development and delivery of the curriculum and qualifications.

This will be a demanding and rewarding role as you will be helping to shape highly skilled and knowledgeable students who are ready for the world of work and/or to go on to study at professional or university level.

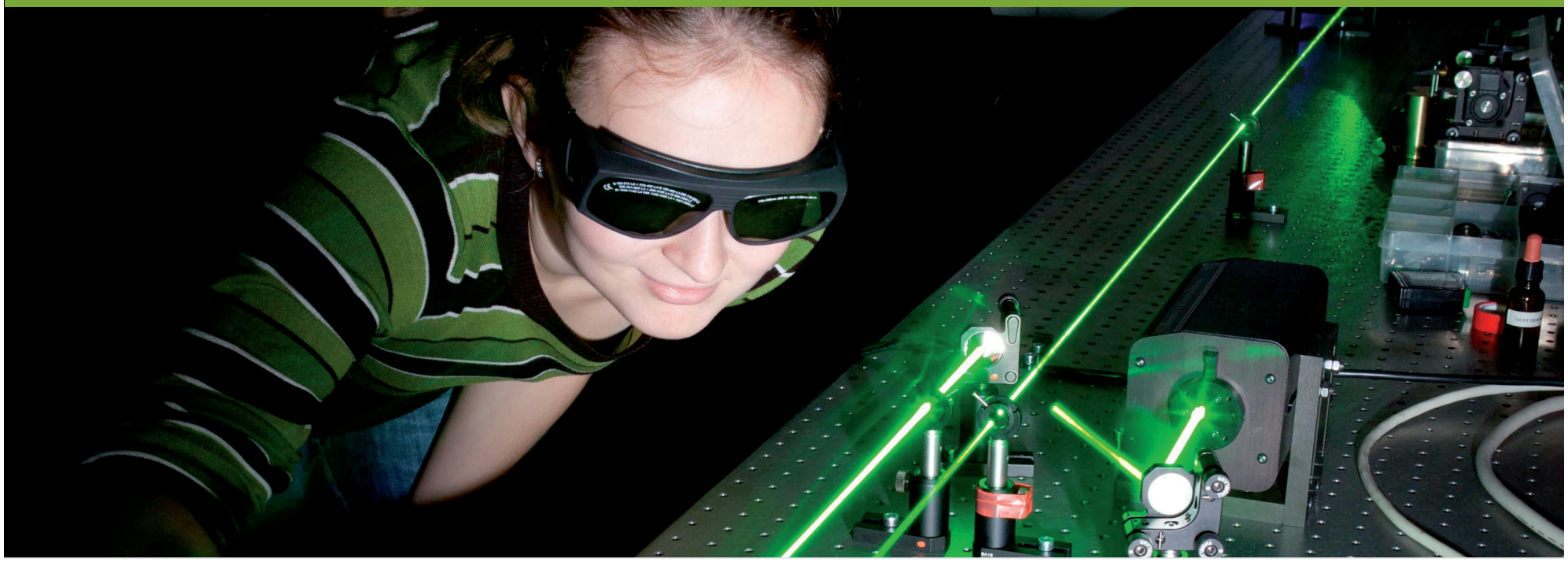


The new academy is sponsored by the Djanogly Learning Trust, the University of Nottingham and Toshiba. It offers ground-breaking opportunities for the right candidate to demonstrate their entrepreneurial prowess, from completing the new build project, through recruiting new staff, to growing teams who share a passion for innovation, and who embody the vision and values of an institution that will be seen as high performing from Day One.

Along with our sponsors you will establish a centre of excellence in STEM and ensure that NUAST is positioned as a leading provider within the region.

Further information about NUAST can be found at www.nuastconsult.org

If you can meet this exciting and challenging expectation then we want to hear from you.



College Leadership Services
Expertise in FE

We are working with College Leadership Services on this important appointment.
For an informal discussion about this role, please contact Marilyn Hawkins, Strategic Lead on 07973 492 195.
Please contact Helen Anderson for an application pack: handerson@collegeleadership.co.uk or 0115 911 1117,
or visit www.collegeleadership.co.uk/current_appointments.asp for further information about this post.

The closing date for this post is 12pm on Tuesday 26th March 2013. Interviews will be held on Wednesday 8th and Thursday 9th May 2013.

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1 Friary
Temple Quay
Bristol
BS1 6EA

LONDON
London Holborn Gate
1st Floor Holborn Gate
330 High Holborn
London
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SHEFFIELD
The Quadrant
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Sheffield
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WARRINGTON
Portal Business Centre
Dallam Court
Dallam Lane
Warrington
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FE Week Sudoku challenge

	6		5					
5					1			
2		3		8	6	9		
8		5				7		
			9		3			
		1				6		4
		6	3	7		2		1
			8					9
					4		8	

Difficulty:
EASY

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

Solutions: Next week

7	3		5		8		6	1
4		1				7		5
5				9				2
			4		2			
3				6				8
9		3				2		6
8	5		6		7		1	9

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Last Week's solutions

9	8	4	2	1	7	5	3	6
3	5	7	6	8	4	1	2	9
1	6	2	5	3	9	4	7	8
6	7	1	4	9	3	8	5	2
4	9	5	1	2	8	7	6	3
8	2	3	7	6	6	9	1	4
5	1	8	3	4	2	6	9	7
7	3	9	8	6	1	2	4	5
2	4	6	9	7	5	3	8	1

Difficulty:
EASY

5	6	4	8	2	1	3	9	7
1	7	2	4	3	9	5	8	6
3	8	9	7	5	6	2	4	1
9	1	7	2	6	5	4	3	8
2	5	3	1	4	8	6	7	9
6	4	8	3	9	7	1	5	2
7	3	5	9	1	2	8	6	4
8	2	6	5	7	4	9	1	3
4	9	1	6	8	3	7	2	5

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

FE Week mini-mascot

Follow the adventures of *FE Week's* biggest and smallest fan!



"Mostly this week I've been teaching baby Tom how to crawl"

You can also follow our *FE Week* mini-mascot on Twitter @daniellinford